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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 003005

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DEPT FOR DS/IP/NEA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [CASC](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: OPERATIONS IN TULKARM, GENERAL CLOSURE OF WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP ONGOING: JULY 14, 2005 (1600 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint Embassy/ConGen cable.

11. (SBU) Summary: IDF operations in Tulkarm continued for a second day following the July 12 suicide bombing in Netanya, which killed five Israelis. A general closure remains in effect for the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip. In Nablus, the IDF on the evening of July 13 shot and killed a local leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). The IDF on July 13-14 arrested 10 PIJ activists in several West Bank locations. In the Gaza Strip, Qassam rockets were fired in the direction of the Israeli town of Sderot and at the Gush Katif settlement in Gaza, but there were no reported injuries. Other sporadic rocket, mortar, and shooting attacks on July 13-14 resulted in no reported injuries. Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmud Abbas is scheduled to travel to the Gaza Strip to confer with the leaders of Palestinian factions, including Hamas and PIJ, in what Palestinian media reports described as an attempt to preserve the calm agreed to by the PA and the factions in Cairo last March. End summary.

West Bank

12. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: IDF soldiers operating in Nablus the evening of July 13 shot and killed a Palestinian man alleged to be a local Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) leader. According to Israeli sources, IDF soldiers shot the PIJ member, who was reportedly armed, as he attempted to evade capture. Palestinian witnesses say that the man was meeting with a British journalist when the IDF broke into his house and chased him outside. Following the incident, the IDF withdrew from Nablus.

-- Injury: Israeli settler youths on July 13 attacked and lightly injured a Palestinian girl in Hebron.

-- Stoning/Injury: Israeli settlers on July 13 stoned Palestinian vehicles in the vicinity of Jit village, west of Nablus. One Palestinian sustained light injuries.

-- Settler Violence: Israeli settlers from Yizhar settlement on July 13 set fire to a Palestinian vehicle and stoned homes in Asira al-Qibliya village, south of Nablus. There were no reported injuries from these incidents.

13. (SBU) ARRESTS/SECURITY:

-- Arrests: The IDF on July 13-14 arrested a total of 10 PIJ activists in several localities throughout the West Bank, including Hebron and Nablus.

-- Closure: The IDF is continuing operations in Tulkarm and nearby Attil village following the July 12 suicide bombing in Netanya.

14. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmud Abbas is scheduled to visit the Gaza Strip to meet with the leaders of the Palestinian factions, including Hamas and PIJ. According to Palestinian sources, the purpose of the meeting is to reaffirm the calm agreed to between the PA and the factions in Cairo last March. Abbas is also expected to raise the issue of coordination with the factions on Israeli disengagement from Gaza.

Gaza

15. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: Nil.

-- Explosive Devices: The IDF reported that Palestinian police found three explosive devices July 13: one near the Dugit settlement, one near the Kissufim Crossing, and one near the Gush Katif settlement. IDF soldiers dismantled the latter two, according to the IDF. No injuries were reported.

-- Kidnapping: According to media reports, the British and Austrian engineers who had been kidnapped and detained by Palestinians in Gaza July 13 have been released following negotiations between Fatah and the abductors. The two are reportedly in good health.

-- Mortars: According to the IDF, a mortar was fired at Israeli civilians July 14 in the vicinity of the Gadid. No injuries were reported.

-- Rockets: According to Israeli media reports, one Qassam rocket was fired at the Sapir College near Sderot causing some property damage, and one was fired at Gush Katif settlement, causing damage to a home. No injuries were reported.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported two shootings July 13 aimed at IDF targets: one near Rafiah Yam settlement and one near the Kissufim Crossing. No injuries resulted.

-- Shootings: According to the IDF, one shooting occurred in the early morning of July 14 targeting IDF soldiers near the Rafiah Yam settlement. No injuries resulted.

16. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS/INTERNAL CHECKPOINTS:

-- Erez Crossing was open to internationals only on July 14.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was closed July 14.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers on July 14, but was open for construction materials.

-- Karni Terminal was open on July 14.

-- Rafah Terminal was open on July 14 in both directions without age restrictions.

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open on July 14 with the exception of the closure noted below, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction.

-- Kissufim Junction, the main entry point to Gush Katif settlement bloc, was closed to non-residents July 14.

-- Toufah checkpoint was open July 14, except to males aged 16-30.

17. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- The IDF is maintaining a general closure of the Gaza Strip starting the morning of July 13. According to UNRWA, as a result of the closing, thousands of Palestinians who have work permits will not be allowed to enter Israel. The IDF announced that the closure will remain in effect "until a renewed security assessment is held."

-- After the IDF implemented a GOI order to bar non-resident Israelis from entering the Gaza Strip and those areas to be evacuated in the northern West Bank, a large traffic jam formed at the Kissufim checkpoint, the main point of entry to the Gush Katif settlement bloc in Gaza. The Israeli media reported that the IDF arrested five protesters in the early morning of July 14 and towed cars blocking the Kissufim junction. The IDF is allowing non-resident Israelis who obtain a permit to enter the Gaza Strip.

PEARCE